

IRAQI JEWS
SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES



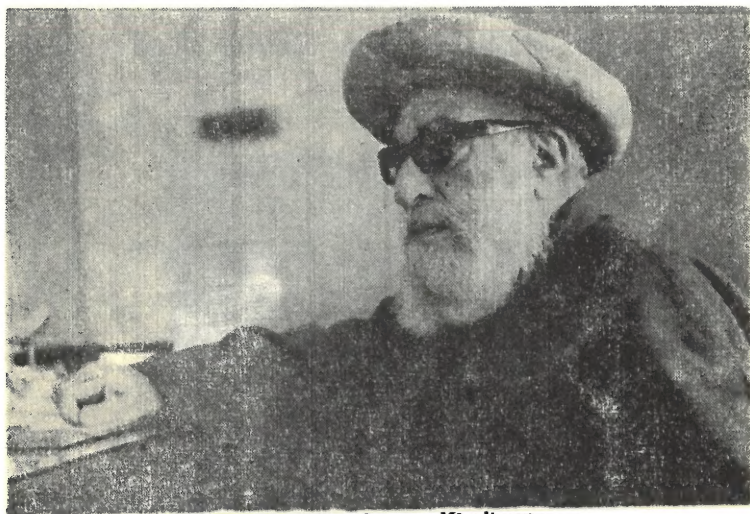
Dar al-Jumhuriyah Press Baghdad

1969

GRAND RABBI SASSON KHEDHOORY

Grand Rabbi Sasson Khedhoory head of the Jewish community in Baghdad had, it is to be recalled, made a number of important statements following the campaigns let loose on Iraq by Zionism and Israel at the time of the execution of the traitorous spies. Now, he has also answered a number of questions put to him by this newspaper on his views concerning the trials of the espionage network and the call made for the emigration of Iraqi Jews.

Following is the translation of his letter of reply addressed to the editor-in-chief of The Baghdad Observer: "I am in receipt of your letter dated February 6, 1969 and am pleased to answer your questions collectively. On various previous occasions, I expounded the loyalty of members of my community and their allegiance to their homeland Iraq, and Iraq alone. All of your questions can find their answers in this general reply. May I also add that the Revolutionary Court is a legal constitutional lawcourt and that its verdicts have been enforced on Iraqis of various communities. As a



Grand Rabbi Sasson Khedhoory

Rabbi and preacher, I hereby proclaim that the Jews of Iraq are enjoying their religious freedom in full and are exercising their rites and religious ceremonies in absolute freedom as is the case with the rest of the countrymen.

As to your fourth question on the travels for Iraqi Jews, I wish to state that some Iraqi Jews, like other citizens, had travelled abroad in complete freedom and returned home of their own free will, on account of their attachment to the pure soil of their homeland and the pride in which they hold beloved Iraq.

As to your question on the Jewish faith and Zionism, I should say that the Mosaic faith is a religion of monotheism and reform and seeks to disseminate love and peace all over the world. As to Zionism, this is a purely political movement.

Dr. EZRA TERZI

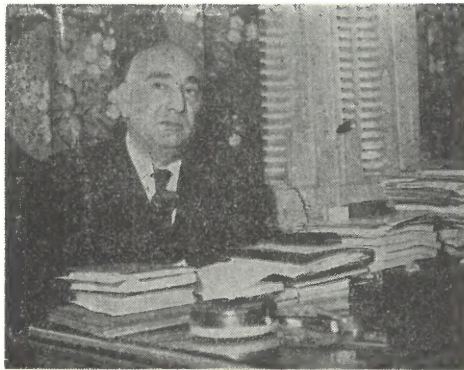
(Following is the first of a series of interviews conducted by the "Baghdad Observer" with Iraqi Jews from all walks of life concerning the Israeli allegations and Zionist propaganda in the West that Jews in Iraq are discriminated and persecuted, and furthermore that the recent spy hangings were aimed at innocent Jews. This is what Dr. Ezra Terzi, a well-established physician in Baghdad of Jewish origin, has to say in refutation of those allegations — his hand-written testimony in Arabic appears below.)

Q. What have you to say as regards Israel's allegations of persecution of the Jews in Iraq and that these Jews are exposed to mass extermination?

A. There is no truth in the allegation that the Jews of Iraq are persecuted or are subjected to extermination.

Q. The imperialistic newspapers had it that mass killings involving men, women and children are going on. Is there any truth in these allegations?

A. There is no truth in the allegations made by the imperialistic newspapers as to mass killings involving men, women and children. In my opinion, the purpose of circulat-



Dr. Ezra Terzi

ing such allegations is to cause defamation to Iraq in the international field.

Q. What is the stand taken by the Jewish faith concerning the Zionist bigotry

A. Judaism is one of the three divine religions and dates back over more than 2,000 years. It has nothing to do with the racial Zionist movement.

Q. What have you to say on the proceedings of the trials of the spies who were convicted of operating on behalf of Israel? What comments do you have on Israel's claim that the Jews among the convicted spies were innocent and were executed only because they were Jews?

A. From the court hearings and the subsequent verdicts, it became clear that those who were convicted and sentenced to death belonged to various religions. That made it clear that the revolutionary Government did not discriminate on account of religion. Besides, the acquittal of a number of Jews and non-Jews, who were found innocent, testifies to the justness and the blameless nature of the trials.

Q. Nahum Goldman, President of the World Zionist Organization is reported to have asked U Thant to make arrangements for facilitating the immigration of Jews from Iraq. Have you anything to say about this?

A. The Jews of Iraq have been living here for many centuries without experiencing any discrimination. I think they can go on living in the same freedom and security as before, side by side with their other Iraqi compatriots.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend respects to the editorial staff of the "Baghdad Observer" for offering me the opportunity of answering these questions.

SALEM SHAMMASH

Next we met with citizen Salem Shammash, 61, a trader.

Said he: "Formerly, I was in government service, having served for twenty-four years with the Railways administration. Now, I am a trader in the market. All my years, I never met with any inhuman treatment whether from the government or from other countrymen such as claimed by the Israeli and imperialistic propaganda organs. The allegations made by these propaganda organs concerning the so-called acts of genocide against Iraqi Jews are poisonous propaganda intended to incite world public opinion against Iraq and win sympathy for Zionism. Zionist bigotry flatly contradicts with the teachings of Judaism. I don't think there is any religion that encourages racial bigotry. My reply to Goldman's call is that his claims are repudiated by our



Salem Shammash

desire to remain in this homeland which is our only homeland."

Sd. Shammash went on: "The attempts made by Israel and Zionism to picture the execution of the spies as an operation aimed solely against the jews are absolutely untenable. The executed spies belonged to many religions. Besides, they have admitted to their crimes. The court has set free a number of Jews and others who were found innocent. This testifies to the justness of the court proceedings."

IBRAHIM AINI AL-ANI

We next called on citizen Ibrahim Aini al-Ani, a 66-year-old trader who lives in Baghdad's Alwiya district.

Sd. al-Ani said that his family had been living in Iraq for more than 600 years. They were in Ana before they moved to Baghdad. "We have always been living in peace and amity with other fellow countrymen, and never experiencing any persecution or discrimination," he said.

As regards the attempts made by Israel and Zionism to stir up rabid campaign against our Government, we know that the purpose of this is to deceive world public opinion by repeating the same fabrications which the Israeli propaganda organs have been producing since the catastrophe of 1948.

"I say catastrophe, because it was so as far as we, the Jews are concerned. We are under no illusion, that it was



Ibrahim Aini Al-Ani



Al-Aini's Family



imperialism which produced that catastrophe. Britain, who was in control of the Arab countries, including Palestine, worked for the creation of Israel as a base for British interests and greedy designs in the region. Britain espoused the Zionist movement and used it for executing the British imperialistic designs."

Sd. al-Ani then commented on the Israeli claim that the spies were executed only because they were Jews and that they were innocent people. He said that Israel's clamour on the executed Jews bore clear testimony to her involvement in the network.

The allegation that the spies were executed because they were Jews is absolutely baseless. Among the executed spies were also Moslems and Christians. On the other hand, the Revolutionary Court acquitted a number of defendants who were found not guilty, including the brother of the leader of the espionage network Ezra Naji Zelkha and some other Jews. This in itself confirms the justice of the Court and its legal proceedings, which are beyond question.

"World Zionism is trying to deceive the people of the world by such fabrications. As a Jewish citizen of this country, I wish to state that the existence of Israel is an act of anomaly. Our religion dismisses racial bigotry. Judaism is a divine religion which condemns all forms of racial discrimination. The Zionist movement is not, in any way, different from Nazism. Using religion as a screen for its sinister ends, Zionism is out to achieve its designs at any cost.

"As our religion tells us, the gathering of the Jews in the 'Promised Land' is to be achieved by the advent of the expected Messiah, and not by any of the means to which Zionism is resorting."

Sd. al-Ani was asked about the call made by Nahoum Goldman, President of World Zionist Organization, for the immigration of the Jews of Iraq. Said he :

“Who gave Goldman custodianship on the interests of the Jews? His call is part of the Zionist machinations designed to confuse world public opinion about the conditions of the Iraqi Jews. His is a proposition which no Jew of this country can accept. Iraq is our homeland and we are not going to leave it under any circumstances. Here we were born and here will we also die. Had we wanted to leave this country, we could have done so many years ago.

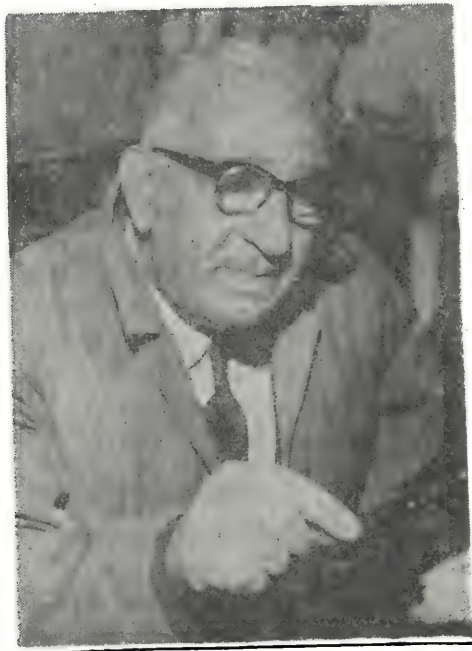
“If the Zionist organization is all that keen on the interests of Jews, it had better bring to task the rulers of Israel for discriminating and persecuting Eastern Jews who moved to Israel under special circumstances. These Jews are subjected to the ugliest forms of racial discrimination by the Zionists, who came to Palestine from all corners of the world and who belong to diverse nationalities.”

In conclusion, Sd. al-Ani and members of his family (Photo left) emphasized the pride they take in their citizenship and their preparedness to live up to all of their obligations under that citizenship towards their homeland and their government.

Sd. MIR BASRI

Interviewed on the storm stirred up by the Zionist propaganda organs over the recent executions of members of an espionage network in Iraq, among whom were some Jews, Sd. Mir Basri, a notable Iraqi Jew, said :

'The presence of Jews in Iraq dates back over more than two thousand years to the days of the famous expedition of Nebuchadnezzar. That is, of course, if we omit to take into consideration the fact that they are descendants of Abraham (peace be on him) — which will make this association more ancient still. As such, the Jews are Iraqis by origin; they are also Arabs like the rest of the people of Iraq who belong to pure Arab stock. The monuments and shrines of our prophets and saints, dispersed in various parts of Iraq testify to this fact. The Iraqi Jews have adhered to their



Mir Basri

Mosaic religion with a fervour only matched by their attachment to this homeland. They maintained allegiance to this homeland, honouring all of its laws with devotion and sincerity. This is in keeping with the dictates of their religion which prescribes absolute obedience to the laws of the land where they live. In their Scriptures, it is explicitly stated that the laws of the temporal power should be treated with the same deference as religion.

"Across the centuries, the Jews of Iraq have been living with other fellow-countrymen in an atmosphere of serenity, cooperation, freedom and prosperity. They enjoyed the same rights and shouldered the same obligations without any distinction. This was ensured to them by the protection accorded under the teachings of the upright religion of Islam.

"The latest evidence of the loyalty of the Iraqi Jews to their homeland was supplied by the reply they made to the forces of the British occupation which asked them what country they sought protection from. Their reply was: 'We seek protection from no state. We will stick together with our fellow Moslem with our sharing with them whatever comes by.'

"Until late in the forties, none of the Iraqi Jews knew anything about Zionism which, to be sure, is diametrically opposed to their creed and religious beliefs centering as they do, on the expectation of the anticipated Messiah. As orthodox Jews, they strictly adhere to these beliefs.

"Were it not for the heavy pressure brought to bear upon them by the exterminated regime as a result of which their lives became threatened in the way known to every Iraqi citizen, no Iraqi Jew would have consented to give up his citizenship and quit this dear homeland leaving behind, as they had done, not only properties and assets but also found memories. As it were, not more than four per cent of Iraqi Jews stayed back apparently because their attachment to their homeland proved just invincible. These have refused to part with the land in which they and their

ancestors lived and where their forbears are buried. I am proud to be one of those who insisted on sticking to this homeland.

"I wish to express the truth about the emigration of the Jews of Iraq after the catastrophe of 1948. The conspiracy was masterminded by Britain and Israel and executed by such puppet rulers as Nouri al-Sa'eed, Tawfiq al-Suwaidi and others. The whole story is now well-known to all members of the Iraqi public. The Jews of Iraq were mostly wealthy people and in control of the country's trade. When the conspiracy of the creation of Israel in Palestine came to be executed, it soon became clear that it was in the interest of Britain and Israel to get the Jews out of Iraq by any means. To Britain, the Jews were offering much too strong competition in the field of trade. As to Israel and world Zionism, these of course wanted the Jews of Iraq to be part of the new artificial structure.

"The conspiracy began to take shape when the government, under instigation from the British, promulgated a law by which all desiring Jews could give up their citizenship and leave the country. Anyone who consults the official records of that period will discover that in one month after the promulgation of the above-mentioned law only fifteen Jews complied. All of them were deluded by the propaganda which pictured Israel as the Garden of Eden. Nor was the figure any higher the following month.

Realising that the Iraqi Jews were unwilling to quit their homeland, the British and the Zionists began to make recourse to acts of terrorism and persecution using the rulers as a medium of coercion to compel the Jews to quit. Now they have succeeded and only a few Jews remained behind who were willing to risk their lives rather than leave their homeland.

"In my opinion, the Jews, and I am one of them, are the

victims of world Zionism. Israel became a calamity to them before being a calamity on the Arabs.

‘ Once again I emphasize that there is no truth in the allegation concerning the persecution of Jewish citizens by the government or people of Iraq. I can in fact, say that no where else in the world have the Jews enjoyed greater freedom or prosperity.

“There had absolutely been no discrimination among countrymen whether in respect to the enjoyment of rights or the discharge of obligation, until the promulgation of the denationalization law and the exceptional regulations and instructions it entailed prior to the blessed July 17 Revolution. On the outbreak of that Revolution, the leadership of the Jewish community addressed a note to the President of the Republic and to the Revolutionary Command Council on the question of revising those exceptional matters. The revolutionary Government proceeded to take the necessary measures concerning that subject.

Those who were tried in the espionage network were not all Jews. Among them were also Christians and Moslems, Some were convicted while others were acquitted, all regardless of their religion. In my view, the sin of the Jewish spies and their crime were worse than those of other spies.

“From the depth of my heart, I emphasize that like other Iraqi law-courts reputed for justice and straightforwardness, the Revolutionary Court and its judgments cannot be called into question. This is especially so as sentences were passed on various convicted persons irrespective of their creeds. Further, the allegation that the authorities are slaughtering Jews — men, women and children — is absolutely without foundation, and is belied by the facts of life.

“Concerning Nahum Goldmann’s advocacy; I know well the wicked objectives which this conceals behind it. Again

I emphasize that the Jews of Iraq never asked for anybody's custodianship or protection.

"Had we, the Iraqi Jews who stayed behind, wished to leave our homeland, we could have done so as others had. But we have held on to our homeland. Personally, I will remain loyal to my citizenship and to my Arab character and will maintain allegiance to this dear homeland right up to death.

"In conclusion, I wish to explain that the Mosaic religion stands diametrically opposed to all forms of bigotry or racism. This religion denounces the Zionist movement, which represents the ugliest form of racial bigotry and which is not, in any way different from Nazism."

ANWAR SHAWOOL
NURI KHELIYIF ABDULLAH

Q. Radio Israel has claimed that the spies convicted recently by the Revolutionary Court were innocent and that they were executed because they were Jews. What have you to say to this?

Q. How do you view the Court's hearings and the sentences passed on the spies?

Q. The Zionist and imperialistic propaganda organs have claimed that Iraqi Jews are subjected to persecution. Would you comment on this?

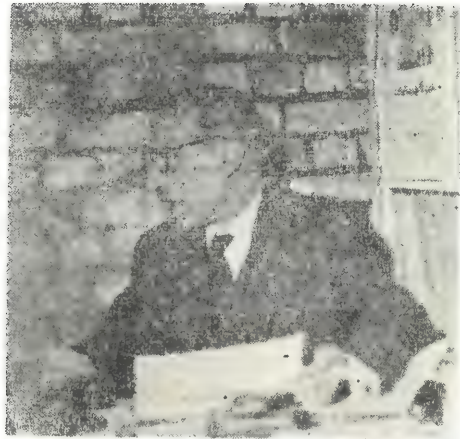
Q. Nahum Goldman, President of the World Zionist Organization, has asked U.N. Secretary-General U Thant to take steps for getting the Iraqi Jews out of the country supposedly to rescue them from acts of genocide. How do you view this call?

Q. What attitude does Judaism take towards the Zionist movement as racial movement?

A. "In answering this question, it should be noted that the persons convicted by the esteemed Revolutionary Court were not all Jews. Among them were also Moslems and Christians. Besides, the Court had set free a number of defendants who were found not guilty and who included Jews and non-Jews. These facts clearly show that in passing



Anwar Shawool



Nuri Kheliyif Abdullah

sentences, the Court was not influenced by the race or creed of the defendants, Jews or otherwise”

A. “The hearings of the esteemed Court and the verdicts passed were in strict conformity with the laws of the land and in accordance with accepted procedures. To criticise the Court’s hearings and sentences constitutes, therefore, an act of hostile propaganda.”

A. “These claims are also part of the same hostile propaganda and are absolutely baseless. The purpose of producing such propaganda is to cause defamation to the progressive revolutionary regime of our beloved Iraq.”

A. “What holds all Iraqis closely to their dear homeland, irrespective of their religions and beliefs, is the fact that they are compatriots. Everyone who lived on this sacred soil and enjoyed the blessings of this country and remained loved and loving, relishing one’s own rights and discharging one’s own duties will always remain attached to his homeland accepting no alternative for it.

“I do not think such a citizen would be influenced by propaganda emanating from abroad from whatever source that might be.”

A. "In my opinion, it is very important to point out to the distinction between Judaism as a faith and Zionism as a racial political movement. To confuse the two together is precisely what Zionism is after so as to find justification for deluding the Jews.

"The Jew, whatever his homeland might be remains attached to the soil of this homeland, as do all other compatriots. Suffice it as a feeling of security and pride for him that he shares with all other countrymen both prosperity and adversity. In my opinion the ties of patrimony, the ties of citizenship are the strongest of all ties. Praised be he who said: "Religion is a faith between man and God, while the homeland belongs to all."

Another Iraqi Jew interviewed Sd. Nuri Kheliyif Abdulla who runs a printing press in Mutanabbi Street, Baghdad.

Sd. Abdullah said: "I am an Arab Jew of Iraq and am proud of my Arabism. We have been living in Iraq for more



Zoura'a Press which belongs to Nuri Kheliyif

than 2000 years along with other communities. I have been running my printing press since 1936.

Sd. Abdullah then proceeded to answer the above-mentioned questions. Here are his replies:

1. I have no doubt as to the justice of the Revolutionary Court.

2. The Revolutionary Court's hearings were legal and the sentences passed were just.

3. Such claims are baseless.

4. I strongly condemn this campaign which is without foundations.

5. The Jewish faith is against the racial Zionist movement.

SAYID IBRAHIM HAQQI

Sayid Ibrahim Haqqi, a Jewish citizen of Baghdad, interviewed on the propaganda campaign directed against Iraq, said: "As a matter of fact, I didn't listen to the whole proceedings of the trial of the espionage network. But from what I heard broadcast over the broadcasting station of some of the court hearings, the hearings were procedural. The fact that the hearings were made public testifies to this view. As to the propaganda campaigns mounted by the Zionist and other organs, these are plainly intended as disparagement to the Republic of Iraq in her new bright era. They are also intended for some other goals which are unknown to me. This is all the more so considering that death sentences were passed on adherents of other faiths as well. Besides, among those who were acquitted were a number of Jews."



Ibrahim Haqqi

Sayid Haqqi added: "What is circulated by the Zionist broadcasting station and by imperialistic and Zionist newspapers that the Jews of Iraq are subjected to persecution and extermination is without foundation. The Jews have been living for a long time in this dear homeland of which we are proud. They have been living under the banner of Islam in peace and amity with the rest of the countrymen. We share with other fellow-countrymen both rights and obligations. My family has been living in one of the towns situated on the Euphrates in central Iraq. We lived in perfect amity with other countrymen as one family sharing each other's feelings in weal and woe. All along we have been proud of our citizenship and of our allegiance to this dear country. As to the question of emigrating from Iraq the door was left open to us under the Denationalization Act from 1950 until 1964. As to the Zionist movement, I know nothing about it and I don't think it has any relation with the Jewish faith.

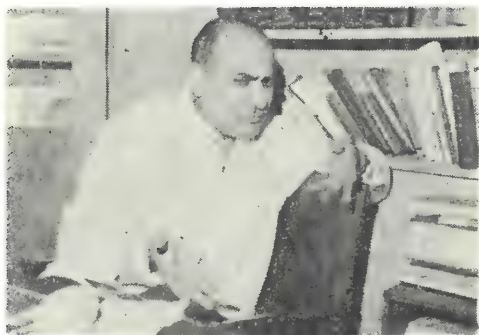
Dr. IHSAN DAWOOD SAMRA

Another Iraqi Jewish citizen interviewed was Dr. Ihsan Dawood Samra, who runs a clinic in South Gate. He is the son of Dawood Samra who was an eminent jurist and for a time, the President of the Court of Cassation.

Dr. Samra opened up by stating that it was a pleasure for him to participate in replying to the Zionist campaigns of slander directed against Iraq. He added: "Over the past twenty years, Israel has been trying to involve the Jews of the Arab countries in its propaganda campaigns. It has styled itself as custodian on their interests although they have nothing to do with Zionism or Israel. The Jews of this country are Iraqi citizens and harbour allegiance to no other homeland. It is a grave mistake to confuse Zionism with Judaism. This is precisely what Israel is after. Judaism is a well-known divine religion while Zionism is simply using Judaism as an instrument for arriving at its goals.

Dr. Samra went on: "The claim made by Israel that acts of genocide were in progress against the Jews of Iraq is without foundation. I am a physician practising my profession in complete freedom as any other citizen."

Referring to the recent trials, Dr. Samra said: "Although I am not a lawyer, I can see for myself that the hearings



Dr. Ihsan Dawood Samra

were just and straight forward as other hearings held by Iraqi law-courts. No doubt can be cast on the just sentences passed by the revolutionary court convicting the criminal and setting free the innocent. Those sentences were passed not only on Jews, as Zionist sources claim, but also on Christians and Moslems convicted."

Dr. Samra further said that Jewish community enjoy perfect freedom of conducting their religious rites in line with other communities.

Commenting on the call made by Nahum Goldman, the President of the Zionist organization, urging the emigration of Iraqi Jews, Dr. Samra said: "The Jews of Iraq have only one homeland, and that is Iraq. They could have emigrated if they so desired, at the time of the Denationalization Act. Besides, the Iraqi Jews can leave the country by ordinary passports. They do not wish to have the Zionist Goldman advising them on such matters."

MEER S. BASRI

1. The Jews have lived in Iraq for long ages in peace and liberty. Under the just and tolerant rule of Islam, their communities flourished and gave birth to men of science and letters, poets, physicians and philosophers. In 1950, forceful international conditions led to the migration of Iraqi Jews, contrary to their wishes, from their beloved country, whose earth was mixed with the remains of their fathers and ancestors. However, the Jews who stayed in Iraq, remained loyal and faithful to this homeland, entertaining the most cordial relations with their fellow citizens of every religion and denomination.

2. I am certain that the revolutionary court, in the espionage trials, did not discriminate between Moslem, christian and Jew.

. Judaism is a religion and Zionism a political movement, and no relation whatever exists between them. Many non-



Meer S. Basri



Meer S. Basri

Jews are fervent Zionists, whereas there are Jews, all over the world, who antagonize Zionism. The Iraqi Jews eagerly desire to live in peace and security in this country, to which they are loyally attached. They have never empowered Nahum Goldman or any other person to speak in their name or demand their emigration. The President of the Jewish Community in Baghdad approached the national government thanking them for the liberty accorded to the Jews of Iraq to practice their religious rites, and asking for the abrogation of the exceptional laws enacted by former regimes, so that Iraqi Jews may earn their living, enjoy their rights and discharge their responsibilities as citizens without hindrance, and thus afford a practical and undeniable refutation to the propaganda stirred up abroad.

In conclusion, I want to stress that Iraqi Jews are Iraqis and Arabs in the depth of their hearts and oppose Zionism with which they have no connection whatever.

NAJEEB SALMAN

In Baghdad's Masbah residential quarter usually populated by the well-to-do, we called on Jewish citizen Najeeb Salman, who runs a textiles retail store in Banks street. Sd. Salman is 42 years old, married and has three children.

In the course of our conversation, he said: "There are a number of points which I wish to explain to world public opinion which might have been misled by prejudiced propaganda emanating from foreign communication media that are often controlled by Zionist organizations. What I want to say is that the Jews of Iraq are part of the people of Iraq and have no homeland other than Iraq. Like other citizens, their main concern is the interest of the homeland. They enjoy their rights and discharge their obligations like other fellow-countrymen. All enjoy the blessings of justice in this country. As do other countrymen, we know the real goals of Israel and Zionism in shedding false tears on the Jews of the Arab countries. Zionism is trying to give the world to understand that the interests of the Jews are linked with its



Najeeb Salman Refutes the Zionist Propaganda



Najeeb Salman's Textiles Retail Store

own and that it assumes custodianship on Jewish interests everywhere. In this way, Zionism seeks to attain to its goals and to push forward its expansionist designs. The Zionist intention became abundantly clear when the national government brought to trial a number of spies on whom just sentences were passed."

Sd. Salman went on: "The wickedness of the Israeli propaganda became exposed stark in the uproar created on the execution of spies. Israel wanted to give world public opinion to understand that the only guilt of those executed was that they were Jews. The Israeli propaganda organs conveniently omitted the fact that the persons tried and sentenced belonged to various faiths. The Court had also appointed defence councils for the defendants. From the confessions made by the defendants themselves and the evidences cited before

the court, it was established that those executed had betrayed the homeland and thus deserved the just punishment meted out to them. All evidences serve to refute the allegations made by Israel and Zionism. What has Israel to say about the acquittal of the brother of criminal Ezra Naji Zalkha the leader of the espionage network? That man, together with some other Jewish defendants, were set free after they were found not guilty. This in itself testifies to the legality and justice of the trials."

Sd. Salman was next asked about his reaction to the allegations circulated by imperialistic and Zionist propaganda organs that the Jews of Iraq were subjected to persecution and acts of genocide. He was also asked about the call made by Nahum Goldman for the emigration of Iraqi Jews. In reply he said: "I want to emphasize what I have said before namely that we are Iraqis living in an atmosphere of fraternity with the rest of fellow-countrymen. The Israeli and imperialistic allegations stand to be condemned as being instruments serving only the interests of Zionism and Israel which, as I said, seek to bring all the Jews of the world under Zionist control. It is our hope that world public opinion will clearly perceive these facts and guard against being carried out by Zionist vociferations. The campaign of slanders now mounted by Zionism and imperialism has for its purpose influencing the progressive revolutionary regime of Iraq and using the execution of the spies as a means for this end. Those executed were traitors and spies who were after the ruination of this country and serving our enemies. Every government in the world has the right to protect itself and safeguard its homefront."

Nash'at Al-Rahmani, a secondary school student who, in his spare time works at Sd. Salman's store, joining in the conversation, said: "Like the rest of Jewish countrymen, I am carrying on with my business normally and in complete freedom. Our businesses were not affected even after the June

war. As to the artificial din raised round the execution of the spies, it must be pointed out that the executions were the natural outcome of treason. This is the case everywhere in the world. Israel tried to put the matter to advantage and began inciting world public opinion on the government of Iraq forgetting that the Jews of Iraq are Iraqi citizens who share with their homeland both prosperity and adversity.

Dr. ALBERT HAKEEM

A number of questions were put to Dr. Albert Hakeem, a well-known physician of Baghdad who, for many years, served as Assistant Professor at the Medical College. His service with the Ministry of Health extended over more than 15 years.

Following are Dr. Hakeem's replies :

1. As the esteemed Revolutionary Court has passed sentences on persons of all faiths, there is no ground in the allegations made by the Zionist propaganda organs that the persons convicted were punished only because they were Jews. The Court has also acquitted both Jews and non-Jews.

2. The trials were by no means summary trials. This can be discerned by anyone who followed the hearings. The sentences passed were in accordance with the laws of the land and of the kind applicable in such cases.

3. The allegations made by the Zionist and imperialistic radio stations and newspapers concerning acts of genocide against the Iraqi Jews are lies. In my opinion, the purpose of such propaganda is to cause defamation to Iraq in the international field.

4. The call made by Nahum Goldman, the President of the World Zionist Organization for the emigration of the



Dr. Albert Hakeem

Jews of Iraq is unwarrantable. There are no acts of genocide. The Iraqi laws do not discriminate between one citizen and another on the basis of religion or race. In my view, this is all pure propaganda and consequently, I stand against it.

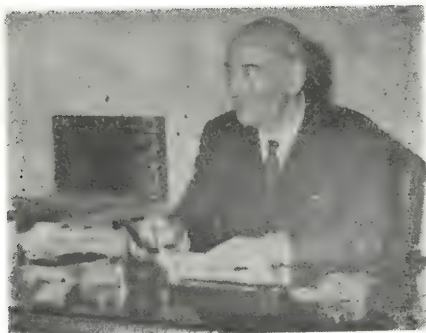
5. The Jewish faith, like all divine religions, enjoins righteousness, tolerance and mutual amity and condemns oppression everywhere. Judaism has nothing to do with the Zionist movement which, I think, rose in the West. Zionism has its own adherents from among Jews and non-Jews. Likewise, there are many adherents of the Jewish faith who fight Zionism in both the East and West. Especially among the latter are the Jews of Iraq who have been living in this homeland since times immemorial :

SAYID KURJI SHO'U BEKHOR

Also interviewed was Sayid Kurji Sho'u Bekhor, a well-known Jewish trader of Baghdad. Summing up his views of the trial of the spies, Sd. Bekhor said: "Iraqi law-courts are known for their justice and uprightness. I have listened to the proceedings of the trials which resulted in the conviction of a number of defendants and the acquittal of others. The sentences passed by the Court were free from racial prejudice as evidenced by the fact that among the convicts were Moslems, Christians and Jews.

Speaking of the rabid campaign directed against Iraq, Sd. Bekhor said: "Israel's lies were all too clear when they claimed that the trials were summary and that the defendants were convicted on trumped-up charges. The facts as we see them, blow to the winds such allegations. A number of defendants have been acquitted. Had it been a case of trumped-up charges, such acquitted persons should have been sentenced. On the other hand, the Court has ensured the right of self-defence to the defendants and appointed councils of defence for them."

Replying to a question put to him, Sd. Bekhor said: "We are going about our businesses normally and in complete freedom as is the case with other countrymen. We



Kurji Sho'u Bekhor



Kurji Sho'u Bekhor with his children

never experienced any persecution or discrimination. Iraq is our homeland and we accept no substitute for it."

Sd. Bekhor also said: "I knew that the Zionist vociferations were too nonsensical to merit any reply. But, bearing in mind Zionism's wicked intentions and its habit of falsifying facts, I wanted to emphasize to world public opinion the lying nature of these fabrications stirred by Israel round us. Israel is resorting to such methods for attaining to her ends which are diametrically opposed to all international concepts and ideals.

SHAMOON MURAD NASEEM

Shamoon Murad Naseem, a Jewish trader, interviewed at his store in Baghdad, said: "Before replying to the lies and fabrications circulated by Israel and Zionism against Iraq, I wish to comment on one important point. It is that the racist Zionist doctrines rose not in the East but in the West in the fostering arms of imperialism which has been using Zionism as an instrument for attaining to its ends. The Eastern Jews never came under the influence of Zionist movement because they have been living in peace and amity with the rest of fellow countrymen in various Arab countries. Here in Iraq, we might be taken as sampling Eastern Jews. For a very long time we have been living in this country sharing with other compatriots both weal and woe. Ever since Israel came into being, it tried hard to attract us to itself but we made up our minds to stick to our homeland. We have been upholding the motto: "Religion belongs to God and the homeland belongs to all". As Jewish countrymen of Iraq we owe allegiance to no other country. As to the campaign directed against Iraq, the purpose is obvious. Israel and Zionism working hand in glove with imperialistic quarters tried to exploit the execution of the spies to bring pressure to bear upon Iraq and takeoff some of the



Shamoon Murad Naseem

growing sting of the international resentment against Israel for her recurring acts of aggression such as the cowardly attack on the Beirut international airport."

Sd. Naseem went on: "The trials conducted by the Revolutionary Court were fair and legal and cannot be called into question. Those convicted had sentences passed on them while those found not guilty were acquitted. All guilty persons received the punishment they deserved under the laws of the land. Besides this is a purely internal issue where the question of the Jews does not arise. As a citizen of this country, I wish to ask why Israel failed to condemn the crimes of treason and spying? As the spies confessed in the course of their trial, they had been planning to kill innocent people, poison drinking water and blow up vital public establishments. Why no denunciatory note was ever heard from anywhere in the world concerning such crimes while world public opinion allows itself to be carried away by the lies and fabrications of Zionism and Israel. Further, why has world public opinion failed to condemn Israel's use of the internationally prohibited napalm against defenceless Arab villages? Why no uproar is raised about Israel's ceaseless flouting of the UN resolutions?

In my opinion it is a waste of time to try to reply to all of the lies and fabrications emanating from Israeli and Zionist quarters. Zionism is an old hand on such vicious techniques and will remain so until it meets with its end as has Nazism.

Dr. NAJI ROBEEN

and his wife

Dr. ALBERTINE IBRAHIM MNASHI

Among Jewish citizens interviewed were Dr. Naji Robeen and his wife Dr. Albertine Ibrahim Mnashi. They share the same clinic in Southgate for more than 16 years now.

Dr. Robeen, referring to the Zionist demagogism stirred up against Iraq, said that after the just executions carried out on a number of spies convicted of betraying their homeland, Israel tried to exploit the situation to its advantage. Accordingly, Israel mounted an unjust campaign which, if anything, indicated the scare Israel felt for the exposure of one of the espionage networks operating on its behalf. Israel sought to picture the question as one directed against the Jews although the Jews of Iraq have been living in peace and amity like all other citizens.

Dr. Robeen added: "The trials were conducted in a legal and just manner. The spies were convicted of operat-



Dr. Albertine Ibrahim Mnashi



Dr. Naji Robeen

ing in the service of Israel. We reject any custodianship from Israel or from Nahom Goldman. We belong to this country and have nothing to do with any foreign quarters. We are Iraqi citizens and have no connections with any other country. Our religion is one of the divine religions. As to Zionism, this is, as we all know, a racial political movement based on bigotry and racial discrimination. Not every Jew is a Zionist nor, conversely, any Zionist a Jew. This is an important fact which one must not lose sight of. It is Israel and the Zionists who wish to confuse Judaism and Zionism with one another in the eyes of world public opinion so as to attain to their greedy designs."

The interview with Dr. Robeen's wife, Dr. Albertine, took the form of questions and answers as follows:

Q. What have you to say on the claims made by the Israeli Radio that Iraq's Jewish citizens were exposed to persecution and genocide?

A. As an Iraqi citizen and a medical practitioner, I say that the purpose of the allegations circulated by Radio Israel is to use them against Iraq and for the advantages of Israel.

Q. Israel's Radio station claimed that the spies convicted by the revolutionary court were executed simply because they were Jews. How is your reaction to such a claim?

A. The Revolutionary Court has conducted its hearings in a lawful manner. Its sentences were passed in accordance with the laws of the land which are applicable on all countrymen irrespective of their religions.

Q. How do you view the court hearings and the sentences passed on the convicts,

A. The hearings and the verdicts were lawful and just and in accordance with the law.

Q. Nahom Goldman, the President of the World Zionist Organization, has urged U Thant to intervene to bring about the emigration of the Iraqi Jews. What have you to say on this?

A. Iraqi Jews are loyal citizens. An opportunity was offered to them to leave Iraq at the time of the Denationalization Act, but they stayed by their own free will.

Q. What is the attitude of Judaism towards the Zionist racial bigotry?

A. Judaism is a divine religion. Zionism is but a political doctrine based on blind bigotry and racial discrimination. Not every Jew is a Zionist, nor every Zionist a Jew.

YOUSSEF YACCOUB

Also interviewed was citizen Youssef Yacoub, 40, a merchant running a shop in Banks Etreet.

Said he: "The claim circulated by Israel and the rest of the Zionist and imperialistic propaganda organs that the executed spies were innocent and were executed only because they were Jews is absolutely baseless. The spies who were executed included a number of Moslems and Christians. The Jewish spies were executed not because they were Jews but because it had been proved that they were engaging in acts of espionage against the country's security. The purpose of such claims is to incite world public opinion against Iraq. Israel has been exploiting the execution of the spies for attaining to some of its odious ends. As an Iraqi citizen, I hereby proclaim that we are living in peace in our country as do all other citizens of various other faiths. As to the fabrications originating from Israel and the imperialistic newspapers claiming that an act of genocide is in progress against the Jews, such fabrications are but part and parcel of the above-mentioned schemings."

Sd. Yacoub added smiling: "This interview constitutes in itself a repudiation of these ugly lies."



Youssef Yacoub

Referring to Goldman's advocacy of the emigration of Iraqi Jews, Sd. Yacoub said: "As Iraqi citizens, we condemn this suspicious call. Iraq is our country and we are not going to leave it under any circumstances. Our stay here testifies to our allegiance to the soil of this country. Besides, I wish to state that the tenets of the Zionist organization led by Goldman squartly contradict with the teachings of our religion which is diametrically opposed to Zionist bigotry.

Citizen Yacoub added: "Before I conclude, I wish to come back to the trial of the spies. I want to say that the trial was legal and that the court had given the defendants every opportunity to defend themselves. The sentences were just and fully substantiated. The fate with which the spies met is the fate that inevitably awaits all those immersed in espionage and treason."

SAMI SAION BLASS

In the 6th storey of Dafterdar Building, Banks Street, a building that houses the offices of a large number of businessmen, we met with another Jewish citizen, Sd. Sami Saion Blass, a 30-year old businessman.

Asked about his opinion on the campaign started against Iraq in connection with the execution of the spies, Sd. Blass said: "In my opinion, the execution of the spies is a purely domestic issue. Every sovereign country in the world has the right to work for the establishment of home peace in every conceivable way. This includes the liquidation of espionage networks whose danger to internal security can hardly be overemphasized. Sentencing convicted spies to death is a common occurrence the world over. But never has such a vicious campaign been stirred up before. The tirades directed against Iraq seek to give the world to understand that the convicted spies were innocent and that their only guilt was that they were Jews. Israel and world Zionism and the



Sami Saion Blass

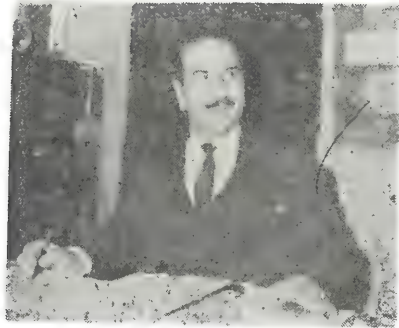
imperialistic communications media backing them up are therefore not concerned about the real interests of Iraqi Jews when propagating such lies but are seeking to attain to a number of specific goals. It is common knowledge, for instance, that immigration to Israel has about ceased after the June war, while emigration from Israel has been steadily growing. By working to secure the immigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel, the Zionist organizations are in fact trying to make up for the deficit. Another goal of the Zionist organizations is to impress upon world public opinion that world Jewry is tied up to Israel and that Israel is legally responsible for them. But more than 80% of the Jews of the world are living elsewhere than in Israel and owe allegiance only to the countries where they live. A third purpose of Israel and the imperialistic quarters is to use this sordid campaign for covering up the recurrent Israeli aggressions on Arab countries and the continued occupation of Arab territory in spite of the Security Council's resolution calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces."

Asked about his impressions of the trials of the spies. Sd. Blass said: "As we all know, the trial proceedings were made public by various news media. The Court never approached the case from a communal or racial angle. The Court simply tried persons on charges that had direct bearing on the destiny of a people and the future of a nation. Those who were found guilty were convicted while others whose innocence was established were set free. Besides, the sentences varied with the nature of the guilt and the availability of legal evidence. In my view, the execution of the spies will always serve up as a stern warning to anyone contemplating betrayal of his homeland or conspiring against national security. We stand with the state in its just measures to uproot espionage in our beloved Iraq."

MOUSA ABU IMRAN

Mousa Abu Imran, 44, was another Jewish citizen interviewed. Sd. Abu Imran who runs a tannery in Baghdad, told of how he had developed his business in complete freedom that has been assured to all countrymen in Iraq regardless of creed or race.

Said he: "I began my life as a labourer at Bata shoe-making workshops more than twenty years ago. I continued to develop my skills in this profession until I set up a factory of my own for tanning raw hides. Never in these years have I felt being a stranger in this country. This is because, like all other Jews of Iraq, I have a sense of belongingness to this soil. Association to the soil of patrimony is the loftiest and most durable of all. As to the uproar stirred up by Israel and the imperialistic quarters against Iraq under the guise of defending the interests of the Jews of Iraq, I have no doubt that the world at large is aware of the pernicious intents underlying those unjust campaigns which followed the execution of a number of spies who were in the pay of Israel. As a citizen of Iraq, I look upon the execution of those traitors as a formidable step for purging our home-front of all agents and renegades. I stand for showing utmost firmness in crushing all spy rings and severely punishing anyone who degenerates into the quagmire of treason."



Mousa Abu Imran

Sd. Abu Imran continued: "Israel's attempts to cast a slur on the Revolutionary Court and dismiss the trials as summary ones cannot stand the test of reality. The Court's hearings were broadcast for all to listen. Members of the public listened to the defendants confess to their crimes. No unjust verdicts were passed, and nothing so testifies to this as the fact that a number of Jews involved in the same case were acquitted. One of those acquitted was the brother of criminal Azra Naji Zelkha, leader of the spy ring. Besides, those who were executed included persons of all faiths: Moslems, Christians and Jews alike."

Commenting on the slanderous campaign directed against Iraq, Sd. Abu Imran said: "These are part of a well thought-out plan masterminded by Zionism with the object of influencing the government of the July 17 Revolution which has assumed an honourable attitude and which is determined to effect a cleanup of all spies and turncoats. This plan has many-sided objectives, one of which is to get the Jews of Iraq to leave their homeland. Underneath this sinister objective is Israel's desire to force us to emigrate to her after all other inducements and intimidations had failed. But Israel is seeking the impossible. Never will we consent to detach ourselves from this dear homeland whatever might be the reasons."

RABBI YOUSIF SA'ATI

An interview was arranged with Rabbi Yousif Sa'ati, 67, who had been delegated by the Grand Rabbi to minister religious rites to the convicted Jewish spies before their execution on January 27. Rabbi Sa'ati who is married and with a number of children, the eldest of whom holds a Master's degree in engineering, was interviewed at his home.

Speaking of the last hours in the lives of the convicted spies, he said: "When Grand Rabbi, Sasoon Khedouri, instructed me to officiate at the ministration rites for the convicts, I went to the central prison a few hours before execution. I conducted the rites in accordance with the teachings of our religion. Some of the convicts confessed to their crimes while weeping, and said they repented their betrayal of their homeland and that they deserved the punishment meted out to them.



Rabbi Yousif Sa'ati

Rabbi Sa'ati added : "The claim that those persons were innocent and that they were executed only because they were Jews contradicts the facts of the situation. The Court that tried them was formed under the laws of the land. The cases which the Court tried were among the gravest that touched immediately on the security and safety of the homeland. The hearings were conducted in the proper procedural manner. Members of the public listened to the confessions made by the defendants, the evidences made by witnesses and the convincing case presented by the prosecution. The sentences passed did not discriminate between defendants on account of religion or race. In my opinion, the purpose of the slanderous campaign directed against Iraq is to interfere with the legitimate measures taken by the government and resort to wicked tactics for this purpose. Like other fellow-countrymen, the Jews of Iraq are concerned about the safety of their homeland and are against treason of any form."

Questioned about his views concerning the Zionist movement Rabbi Sa'ati calmly replied : "It is a grave mistake to establish any relation between Judaism and Zionism which is a political racist movement. The Mosaic faith to which we adhere preaches peace and love for all mankind without discrimination. Zionism, on the other hand, is a racist movement which employs religion to screen its sinister designs and dark schemings. It seeks to give the world to understand that it is the natural defender of the Jews of the world who, to be sure, renounce it and dissociate themselves from its sinister ends. A great many of the Jews of the world would have nothing to do with the Zionist movement or with Israel. They have resisted all inducements to go to Israel. Here in Iraq, we express pride in our belongingness to this homeland and our association with its soil. We give no heed to the vociferous campaigns directed against this country campaigns which we consider as part and parcel of the Zionist-imperialistic schemings against our dear country."

NAJI SALEH DANIEL

Naji Saleh Daniel, said in a written note: "In reply to your questions on the conditions of Jews in Iraq I wish to submit the following: Being an Iraqi citizen and sincere to my homeland where I was born and raised, I share with my country its joys and pains. The purpose of the propaganda which keeps coming out from the Zionist and imperialistic quarters is to cause defamation to revolutionary Iraq and her national government.

As regards the esteemed Revolutionary Court, I have no doubt as to its justice. The sentences passed held no distinction between a Jew, a Moslem or a Christian. While the court passed sentences on convicted persons, Jews, Moslems and Christians, others, of the same religions were set free after they were found not guilty.

"The Iraqi Jews are citizens sincere to their homeland, Iraq. Undoubtedly therefore, the national government does not discriminate between one citizen and another whatever their faiths might be. Nor does the national government prac-



Naji Saleh Daniel



Naji Saleh Daniel with his family

ice any persecution. We have been crying on with our businesses like all other countrymen.

“As concerns the request the Zionist organization made to the UN Secretary-General for getting the Iraqi Jews to leave their homeland, all I want to say is that the Jews of Iraq are not concerning themselves in any claims made by Nahom Goldman or any other. Formerly we were offered many opportunities to leave the country but we preferred to stick to the country which has always been our homeland.

“Needless to say, the Jewish faith, like all other divine faiths such as Islam and Christianity, condemns all racial prejudices. The Zionist movement being a racial movement, thus stands condemned in the face of the Jewish religion.

BAKHASH EZRA MURAD

Bakhsh Ezra Murad, a 56-year old Jewish trader, said the uproar raised around the trials conflicts with plain common sense. The trials were broadcast over the broadcasting and television stations of Baghdad. They exposed the espionage network which was operating on behalf of Israel. The Revolutionary Court proved its justice in passing sentences on convicts of adherents of various faiths.

Sd. Murad's daughter, Vivienne, a 20-year old university student, joining in the talk, said it was a clear act of distortion on the part of the Zionist quarters to propagate the claim that the spies were executed simply because they were Jews. "By peddling such lies, Israel is seeking to deceive the world and misrepresent facts to it. The Jews of this country have always been loyal to their homeland. We share with other fellow-countrymen both prosperity and adversity. We cannot agree to seeing espionage networks operating to bring about the ruination of our country and serve the interests of the enemy. We are sorry for the unjust propaganda campaign mounted by foreign communication media against



Vivienne Bakhash Ezra Murad



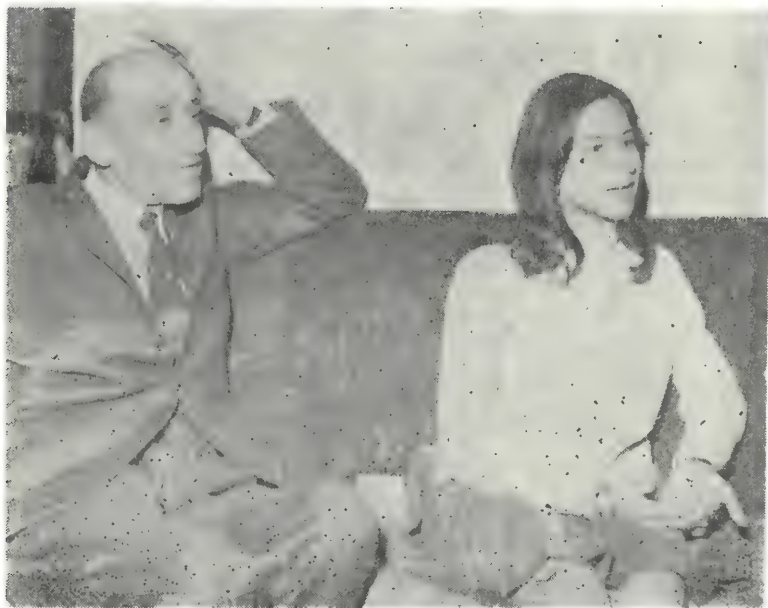
Bakhash Ezra Murad with his family

our government. Such communication media were taken in by false propoganda nations which had for their purpose causing defamation to our government for no other reason than that it has executed a number of traitors and criminals who held no allegiance to this homeland. No innocent man was executed and the sentences were passed on the convicts for the crimes they committed, not because they were adherents of the Jewish or any other faith."

Sd. Murad emphasized that the Jews of Iraq were carrying out their religious rites and going about their businesses in complete freedom in line with other countrymen. He added: "I wish to ask why the world communication media have remained silent when Israel was, and still is, hurling thousands of the Arabs of the occupied territory inside prisons and concentration camps and exposing them to all kinds of torture and terrorism."

Asked about the call made by Nahom Goldman, President of the World Zionist Organization, urging the Jews

of Iraq to emigrate, Sd. Murad said: "This call is by no means new. The new thing about it is that Israel and Zionism have availed themselves of the execution of the spies for reviving its sinister call. The Zionist quarters, realizing that the Jews of Iraq and of other countries as well, prefer to stay in their respective homelands, decided to resort to new lies and fabrications in the hope of succeeding now where they failed in the past. The fact however remains that the homeland belongs to all while religion is a matter of faith between man and God. This refutes the Zionist claim that Zionism speaks for all the Jews of the world. The Jews are innocent from the machinations of Zionism, They are not prepared to change their homeland for any reason. Had we, the Jews of Iraq, wanted to leave this country, we could have done so long ago. That we have been sticking to this country testifies to our attachment to its soil and our willingness to offer sacrifices for it."



Bakhash Ezra Murad with his daughter

MOSHE MUALLEM

When I called at the house of Jewish citizen Moshe Muallem in Alwiya, I did not find him there. I therefore talked to members of his family sounding their views on the campaign launched against Iraq.

His daughter, Amel, a secondary school graduate, spoke of the hysterical onslaughts directed against Iraq following the execution of the spies. Said she: "The feelings we have towards the executions are by no means different from the feelings of other countrymen. Those executed were not, as Israel claims, innocent nor were they exclusively Jews. They were convicted of high treason and of espionage on behalf of the enemy. The details of the trials were broadcast over the radio and television stations and we listened to the convicts make detailed confessions on their participation in the network and on the acts of sabotage they had carried out."

Amel Muallem further said: "The Court has acquitted



Moshe Muallem with his family

a number of defendants including some Jews. This in itself testifies to the justice of the court and to the lying nature of the propaganda directed against Iraq. Were it a matter of summary trials, all defendants might well have been sentenced to death and executed."

Questioned about Israel's purpose in producing such fabrications, Amel said: "The purpose is obvious. Israel wishes to deceive the world into believing that we, the Jews of Iraq, are in danger and that she is the vigilant guardian of Jewish interests. In this way, Israel can divert the attention of the world from the series of crimes she has been committing such as the attack on Beirut's international airport where 13 airliners were destroyed."

Joining in the conversation, Amel's sister Beeba, a secondary school graduate too, said: "I feel amazed at the fact that world public opinion is taken in by Israel's malicious fabrications. As far as the execution of the spies is concerned, this is a purely domestic issue. Among the traitors executed were also Christians and Moslems. Convicted spies are executed everywhere else in the world. Why then is such an uproar stirred up against Iraq? The uproar was stirred up for the execution of traitors who sought to bring ruination upon our country, but silence was assumed concerning their treason and their affiliation in sabotage organizations which could have claimed thousands of innocent victims."

Amel, commenting on Israel's demands for the emigration of Iraqi Jews said: "In what right does Israel make such a demand? Is she the custodian on the Jews of the world? My reply to this demand is that Iraq is our homeland for which we accept no substitute. We are proud of our belongingness to this homeland and we want the world to understand that we have not asked for anybody's custodianship. Israel and world Zionism might try to deceive the world by such base methods, but we are not going to be deceived nor will our feelings towards our homeland be in any way altered."

HARON SHASHA

In al-Mutanabi Street, one of Baghdad's traditional streets which now abounds in bookshops and printing presses, we already interviewed a Jewish citizen, the proprietor of al-Zawra'a Printing Press. Now, we are interviewing another Jewish national, Sd. Haron Shasha proprietor of al-Hilal Printing Press, one of the most modern printing presses in Baghdad. Sd. Shasha also owns a number of apartment buildings in different parts of the capital. These are known as Shasha's buildings.

Sd. Shasha said that his business is going in an orderly manner. Some twenty two workers of various faiths are employed at his printing press.

Sd. Shasha added: "Never have we experienced any discrimination in any way. Our businesses and our freedoms



Haron Chasha

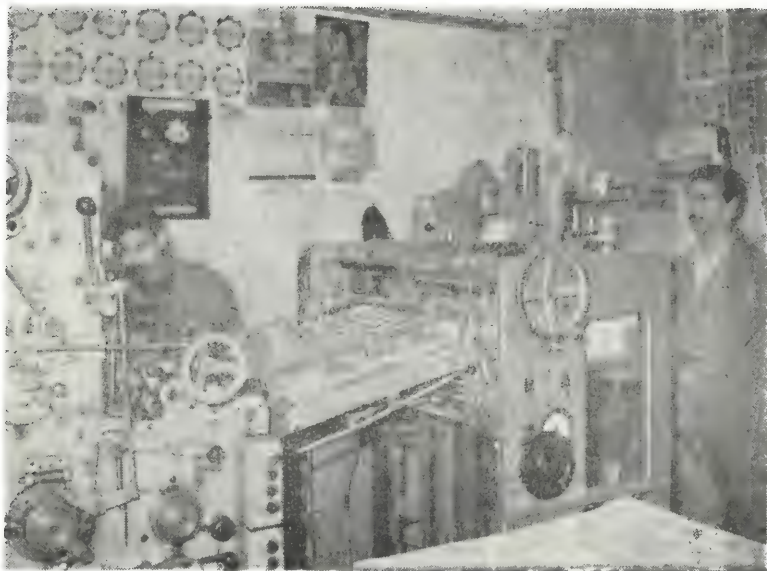


One of the press machine which belongs to Haron Shasha

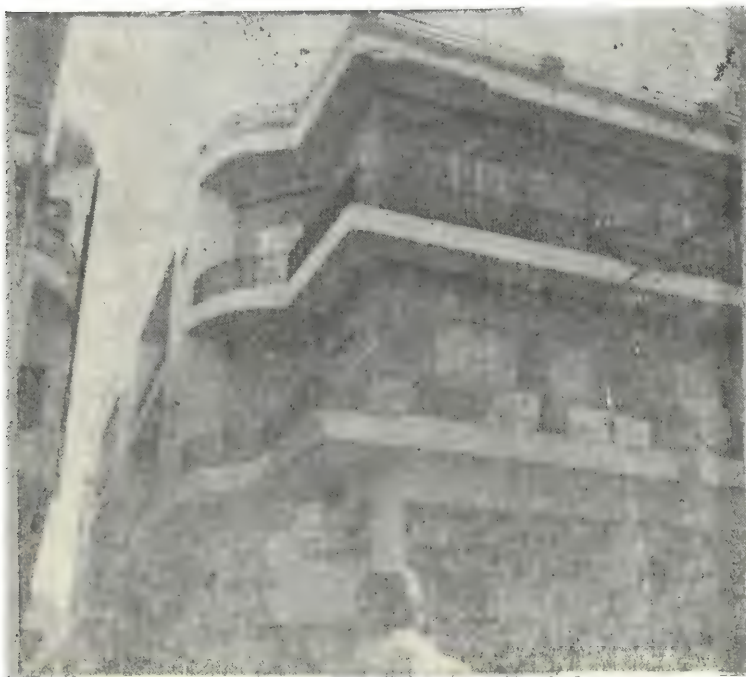
were not affected by the June war. That is attributed to the state's and the people's conviction that we are loyal to this homeland and constitute an inseparable part of it. As a Jewish citizen, I condemn the attempts made to deceive the peoples of the world into believing that we, the Jews of Iraq, are subjected to acts of genocide or persecution. The call made upon the Jews of Iraq to leave their homeland is a suspicious call which we reject. Iraq is our only homeland. We can never detach ourselves from it."

Sd. Shasha further said: "As regards the tempest stirred against Iraq following the execution of a number of spies, I should say that the fate of the traitor is quite obvious. No innocent person was convicted or executed. The criminals had confessed before the court and again some hours before their execution in the presence of the Rabbi. Among those executed were also a number of Moslems and Christians, which gives the lie to the misleading campaigns mounted by Israel and Zionism."

Sd. Shasha proceeded to comment on the allegations emanating from Israel and the imperialistic quarters. He



Press machine belongs to Harron Shasha



One of the big buildings which belongs to Haron Shasha

said that the justice of the court and the legality of its sentences cannot be called into question. One of those acquitted was the brother of the leader of the espionage network. As a Jew adhering to religious teachings, I must say that like other divine religions, our religion condemns betrayal of the homeland. The criminals executed were not innocent as Israel claimed but were traitors who received the punishment they deserved.

MURAD ISHAQ

In Khan al-Shabandar, we met with citizen Murad Ishaq, 70, who runs a stationary shop.

Sd. Ishaq said: "All I have to say about the noise stirred up by Israel and the other imperialistic powers is **that we, the Jews, have been living in this country in peace for so long. The security and safety of this country is of concern to us as to other citizens. The spies were executed not because they were Jews but because they were traitors who betrayed their homeland. Accordingly, they received just punishment in a legal trial. We are with the government on any measure conducive to safeguarding the security of the homeland.**"



Murad Ishaq

SABEEH SALEEM SAYOUN

Citizen Sabeeh Saleem Sayoun, 25, a worker employed at the same store, said: "The purposes of Israel and Zionism in circulating such lies and fabrications is obvious. It is to bring pressure to bear upon our government. As a Jewish citizen, I hereby state that the execution of spies in any country is a right exercised by the sovereign state for the preservation of peace and stability. Does Israel expect the government to pat the spies on the shoulders for the crimes they committed and of which they confessed before the just Revolutionary Court?"



Sabeeh Saleem Sayoun

YOUSIF DAWOOD MUSAFFI

Another Jewish citizen interviewed was Sd. Yousif Dawood Musaffi. The interview took place at his home also in Masbah quarter. Sd. Musaffi said: "It has become customary of Israel to weave up lies and fabrications. This has been her wont, right from the outset. As a Jewish citizen of Iraq. I can say that the recent uproar stirred up by Israel following the execution of her agents in Iraq was in keeping with her wicked tactics, deception and misrepresentation of facts. The Jews of this country, and I am one of them, have been living in peace with other fellow countrymen. We have experienced no discrimination either from the government or from fellow-countrymen. I can emphasize that the freedom we enjoy in this country might not be available to Jews in other countries. Our association with the soil of this country is deep and extensive. We are proud of our Iraqi citizenship. Had we desired to leave this country we could have done so long ago. We still can do so whenever we wish."

Commenting on the call urging the Jews of Iraq to emigrate, Sd. Musaffi said: "World Zionism is trying in every conceivable way to tempt the Jews to emigrate to Israel. Zionism has been concentrating on the Jews of the Arab countries in particular and has therefore availed itself of



Yousef Dawood Musaffi

the opportunity of the execution of the spies to serve its ends and to give the world to understand that we, the Jews of Iraq are threatened with extermination. This is baseless. The spies executed were not exclusively Jews. Among them were Christians and Moslems. Besides, a number of defendants were acquitted including Jews and non-Jews. These facts enhance the confidence we have in the justice of the court that tried the case. Betrayal of the homeland is against the teaching of our religion. As I said before, the purpose of the lies circulated by the Israeli propaganda organs is to cause defamation to Iraq and cover up the continuation of the Israeli aggression and the occupation of Arab territories."

In conclusion, Sd. Musaffi said: "I also wish to call upon world public opinion everywhere to denounce and condemn Israel's criminal acts instead of being carried behind an unjust campaign stirred by Israel herself.

SABAH ELIAS EQEIRIB

Sabah Elias Eqeirib, is a Jewish trader, who also spoke on the campaign mounted by Israel and the imperialistic quarters following the execution of the spies.

Interviewed at his home, Sd. Eqeirib said: "The lies propaganda by Israel and world Zionism do not constitute anything new. It has been Israel's wont to conceal facts and stir up tempests for attaining to her ends. The claim that the spies were committed to summary trials and that those executed were in fact innocent are all claims without foundations. Had it been a case of conducting summary trials, the proceedings would not have been made public over the broadcasting and television stations, nor would the Court have appointed councils of defence for the defendants. I recall that the President of the Court used to address the defendants as 'my son' or 'my brother'. This is the utmost of informality with defendants against whom grave charges bearing upon the security of the homeland were made. Besides, there are other evidences testifying to the justice of the court and its sentences. Among those was the acquittal of the brother of the leader of the espionage network and some other Jews. It should also be remembered that those executed were not all Jews but included Moslems and Christians as well."



Sabah Elias Eqeirib

Sd. Egeirib further said: "While pretending crying over the Jews of Iraq, Israel is in fact crying over some of her agents who met with the punishment they deserve. The Jews of Iraq are Iraqi citizens and have no association with any other country. We are innocent from what is propagated by Israel who is employing Judaism as a screen for covering up the outrageous nature of her daily crimes. We look upon the Zionist movement as one opposed to humanity. In my opinion, Zionism is the twin sister of defunct Nazism. Though some of the lies and fabrications emanating from Zionsm managed to get passed off on world public opinion, the day will come when the whole world will rise to fight Zionism and wipe it out as it once did to Nazism."

Speaking of the call made by the Zionist organization upon the Jews of Iraq to leave the country, Sd. Egeirib said: "If we ever wanted to leave our country, Iraq, we could have done so long ago. We still can do so now. Our attachment to this homeland is however one of destiny. We have been living here for many centuries, never experiencing any persecution or discrimination."

Sd. Egeirib heaped scorn on the claims that the Jews of Iraq are being subjected to extermination. He said that such wil fabrications are part of a Zionist-imperialistic plan, one of whose express purposes is to incite world public opinion against Iraq. Any news correspondent can come to Iraq and talk to Iraqi Jews, including myself, for obtaining first-hand information on their condition. All I can say about the wild claims of the Zionist propaganda organs is to quote the well-known Arab saying: 'If you are without a sense of shame, you surely can do anything you like'.

Dr. SALMAN DARWISH

The attachment of Iraqi Jews to their homeland has been underscored by Dr. Salman Darwish, a noted Jewish doctor of Baghdad.

Interviewed at his office, Dr. Darwish spoke of the Zionist movement and of the attitude taken towards it by Eastern Jews. He said: "As is well known, the Zionist movement is a purely political movement that stems from the premise of narrow racism which, in the world of today, evokes nothing but contempt. This is because racism and racial bigotry flatly contradict humanity's most cherished hopes of achieving perpetual peace and prosperity to mankind. I must point out here that, as we all know, Zionism has its origin in the West. It has remained alien to Eastern Jews for the simple reason that the latter are too much attached to the lands in which they live and in which their ancestors lived to be in any way influenced by the Zionist demonic schemings. This is more so as regards the Jews of Iraq and the rest of the Arab countries in particular. It should also be noted that many ardent Zionists have been non-Jewish such as Churchill for instance. Inversely, many Jews are known to have been fervant anti-Zionists and they



Dr. Salman Darwish

have devoted all their energies to fighting everything represented by this wicked movement which is but a facsimile of the defunct Nazi movement."

Dr. Darwish added: "Another noteworthy point pertains to the structure of society inside Israel. There, Western Jews hold absolute sway over all aspects of life and control all sensitive posts. Eastern Jews are glaringly underprivileged. It is a fact, for instance, that the conditions of the Jews of Iraq are by far superior to those of Eastern Jews in Israel. This in itself should be enough to belie the claims and vociferous campaigns aimed at taking advantage of us for serving the dark purposes of Zionism. We have never sought anybody's protection. Had we wished to leave Iraq we could have done so long ago. It should also be remembered that many Iraqi Jews and Jews from other Arab countries are now living in America, Britain and other European countries, rather than go to Israel or cooperate with Zionism."

Discussing the diatribes directed against Iraq following the execution of a number of spies, Dr. Darwish, noting that the executed spies belonged to various religions, said: "One question I wish to pose to world public opinion is this: What other punishment is there for high treason? Isn't every government entitled to protect its security against the evil-doings of spies and saboteurs? As a physician and a Jew strongly adhering to the Jewish faith, I hereby proclaim that the Jewish citizens of this country share the same feelings with their other fellow-countrymen concerning the trial and punishment of any spy. As to the vociferous campaigns meted out to Iraq, I must say that they only betray their real sinister designs and also betray Zionism's traditional tactics of making travesty of facts. My conviction is that world public opinion has now reached a stage where it can no longer be taken in by lies and fabrications whose wicked purposes cannot be concealed."

ELIAS YOUSIF SHOHAIT

Citizen Elias Yousif Shohait, a Jewish trader, expressed the truth about the Zionist campaign directed against Iraq as follows: "I strongly condemn the rabid Zionist propaganda campaign against Iraq. We are Iraqi citizens and are honoured by our belongingness to this dear homeland. We are with the government on every measure that aims at upholding the interest of the people and the homeland. We have been living in this dear country for thousands of years. All I wish to explain about the allegations emanating from Zionist quarters is that the purposes of these allegations are obvious. The Jews of Iraq are experiencing no persecution nor are there any acts of genocide. The attempts made to exploit the execution of the spies and to call the justice of the revolutionary court into question are to be rejected all and sundry. The trials were legal and in accordance with the laws of the land. Accounts of the hearings were broad-



Elias Yousef Shohait with his family

cast by the radio and television stations. In my opinion the purpose of the Israeli claims is to win over the sympathy of world opinion and incite foreign countries against Iraq. This all is for serving the purposes of Zionism which is but another facet of Zionism. As far as our religion is concerned, this religion renounces Zionism as a racist movement engaged in activities which are squarely opposed to human values and in common league with racial bigotry.

YOUSIF SHAWOOL

As the reader must have discerned in our series of interviews with fellow Jewish countrymen, we have sampled various walks of life — the merchant, the doctor, the lawyer, the writer and the wage-earner. We did so to show that freedom in this country is available to all Jews on parity with the rest of the countrymen. As to the endeavours made by Israel, Zionism and world imperialism to cause defamation to our Republic and our progressive socialist Revolution carried out by the Arab Socialist Baath Party, these will in no way be able to influence the advance of Iraq's Revolution towards the goals which the leaders of the Revolution have vowed to attain and which include the purging of the home-front from all agents and spies.

The interview given here was made with a Jewish ex-



Yousef Shawool

civil servant and a present pensioner. He is Sd. Yousif Shawool, 68, who has to his credit a 27-year service record with the Ministry of Health and who, since his retirement is receiving pension salary.

At his home in Baghdad Sd. Shawool talked about the vociferous campaign mounted by the Israeli Zionist propaganda organs following the recent executions of spies. Said he: "Every country in the world has its own laws and regulations. As in other countries of the world, Iraqi laws provide for death penalty to the traitors and spies betraying their homeland. That penalty was imposed on members of the espionage networks who were convicted of the charges made against them.

"As to the artificial uproar raised by Israel that was something to be predicted. After all, on whose behalf were those spies operating? On behalf of Israel, of course! Israel's diatribes call, therefore, for no wonder, What does call for wonder however, is the attempt to picture the situation as one of persecution of the Jews.

"Like other countrymen, we the Jews of Iraq condemn treason and espionage of any form. In my opinion, these unjust campaigns are ingredients of the plan of world Zionism to deceive the world into believing that Zionism is responsible for offering protection to the Jews."

Sd. Shawool went on: "The world Jewry belongs to diverse nationalities. In spite of the Zionist pretensions, the Jews have been sticking to the countries where they live.

"Here in Iraq, we have nothing but fidelity to our homeland, and are only concerned about Iraq's peace and security. Like other countrymen, we go about our businesses and practise our religious rites in complete freedom. I myself am receiving pension from the state which I served for more than a quarter of a century."

Questioned about the Zionist allegations that the persons sentenced were tried on trumped-up charges, Sd. Shawool

said: "If it was a case of a summary trial, why then were the hearings made public over the radio and television? Why did the court appoint council of defence? How come that five Jewish defendants, including the brother of Ezra Naji Zelkha, the leader of the first espionage network, were acquitted? How come that five Moslems and Christians were executed?

"No one can be taken in by the Zionist fabrications. The convicts themselves had confessed to their own crimes in betraying the homeland. Such betrayal has nothing to do with religion. Neither has the act of punishing the crime."

Sd. Shawool further said: "As to our religion's attitude towards racist movements such as Zionism, I should say that as a divine religion, our religion stands for tolerance, and mutual amity and against all forms of racial bigotry. As a religious man, I must say that the return of the Jews to the Promised land can only be accomplished by the advent of that expected Messiah and by Divine will, as our religion teaches.

"As to Israel's present structure, this is a purely political structure which has nothing to do with Judaism. Zionism is simply trying to exploit religious sentiments among the Jews for attaining to her ends and delude them by the notion that this is what the Scriptures taught."